

Rochester

CATHEDRAL BEACON

The regular newsletter from the Development Office of Rochester Cathedral



From the Acting Dean's desk...

At fifty years, Robert Stevens was the longest serving Dean of Rochester. He was succeeded by Thomas Dale who tragically was the briefest, surviving only four weeks in office. With the resignation of Dean Mark Beach I now find myself in the unique

position of being Acting Dean for a record third time! Mark, who was appointed in May 2012, has now taken up a position outside the Church. We wish him well in his new post.

Although unexpected it is a privilege to be invited to take on this role again. Despite the challenges which face the Cathedral at this time I feel enormously blessed in having the support and good will of the Cathedral staff, congregation and the wider community of Medway and Kent.

One area of particular concern has been the progress, or lack of it, on the capital side of the Hidden Treasures Fresh Expressions Project. From the outset we have unfortunately been dogged with problems, culminating in the discovery of nationally significant archaeology under the Kent steps precisely in the planned location of the new lift shaft into the crypt. From an historical point of view this discovery has been a bonus, but financially and from the perspective of improving access into the crypt, it has not been. Nevertheless, the project team has worked tirelessly to resolve this situation and the Heritage Lottery Fund and other funders, such as the Cathedral Friends and Colyer- Fergusson, have been exceptionally understanding and generous in their continuing support.

It is now hoped that the building works will be completed by the autumn (dare I say that?) and that disabled access to the crypt will be via the south side of the Cathedral Garth. This has meant rethinking and redesigning this route in order that it is fit for purpose. Although not ideal it remains a temporary solution until an alternative one can be found.

On the activity side of the project there has been good progress and amazing flexibility as we adapt to the shifting timetable for a completed exhibition space in the crypt. The Textus Roffensis, alongside the interesting, but less well known, Custumale Roffense is now online and the Cathedral Library is in the process of being catalogued at the University of Kent. Due to the building work delays, our first planned exhibition, The Mystery Book, has been postponed and in October we will be hosting the Faversham Magna Carta as part of the 800th anniversary celebrations. This exhibition will be distinctive in that it will be the only place where Magna Carta will be displayed alongside its precursor Textus Roffensis.

In an age when churchgoing is an exception, rather than the norm, it is really important that we remain open to new opportunities for engaging people. In this respect the Church's fabric and its 'treasures' are inextricably linked to its mission and ministry. The very stones are a vehicle for the spiritual and a significant way for those for whom regular worship feels alien, to connect with the Church. I hope in this coming year many will engage with the exciting programme of events and in so doing experience something of the generosity of God.

Canon Dr Philip Hesketh
Acting Dean of Rochester

Pledges and gifts from 1st January 2015

£46,245.48

PLEASE HELP US AND DONATE NOW By phoning 01634 810074 or go to: www.justgiving.com/rochestercathedral trust

2015 Fundraising Concert Information

We have some very exciting concerts coming up this year which are being held to raise money for the Music Endowment. We desperately need to replace a sinking fund that will run out this year so that we can continue our excellent music tradition.

The First one is **The Rochester Cathedral Memorial Concert** taking place with the kind permission of Lord & Lady De L'Isle at **Penshurst Place** on Sunday 31st May 2015. We can offer such a full programme starting at 5pm with entry via the private entrance and an opportunity to walk around the beautiful summer gardens (it is "Glorious Gardens Week"). Then enjoy your "bring your own" picnic in the grounds at the front of the house before attending a concert in the majestic Baron's Hall. This concert, arranged by Christopher Thornton, is in memory of music lovers now departed. Ticket price also includes wine and soft drinks during the interval.



Performers are **The Medway String Quartet, The Royal Tunbridge Wells Orpheus Male Voice Choir** and the **Choral Scholars** from Rochester Cathedral. Ticket price is £45 with Senior Concessions at £40.



The second is another fabulous concert with **James Taylor and his Quartet** on Friday 19th June. We are delighted that this seems to be turning into an annual event! So those Jazz funk fans, please do put this in the diary. Last year the cathedral was packed and people were dancing in the aisles! James lives in Rochester and holds the cathedral very close to his heart. He has written a very special Mass for our Choir which is being performed for the first time in The Queen Elizabeth Hall in London in April, but will also be performed again here. Tickets £20.

The third concert this year is a very special "**Land of Hope and Glory**" concert, hosted by Cheryl Baker on Friday 16th October. Performing will be **The Kent Sinfonia Orchestra**, a 45 piece orchestra of international acclaim; **The Ruby Chorus Choir** are a 40 piece choir based in Tenterden consisting of a mixture of professional and amateur singers who perform to very high standards under the musical direction of Ms Maxine Wilson; **Faryl Smith**, a British teen mezzo-soprano who rose to fame after appearing on the second series of the talent show *Britain's Got Talent* in 2008; the tenor Jonathan Ansell, one of the UK's most admired young tenors.

Jonathan has sold over 2 million albums and shot to fame on the first ever series of *The X Factor* in 2004 where he was part of pop-opera group G4, came second and went on to top the charts with 3 albums and four sell out tours. Jonathan has gone on to release three solo albums; **Katie Marshall** is 14 years old and at a very young age showed a talent for singing classical music. She has been having classical singing lessons since she was 6 years old and her voice coach is the opera singer Julie Unwin.

Our host for the evening will be **Cheryl Baker**, famously a member of Bucks Fizz. This promises to be an amazing evening so do come along and join us for excellent entertainment and some flag waving! This concert is being co-presented by Abigail's Footsteps, a local charity set up by David and Jo Ward after the tragic still birth of their daughter Abigail.

The profit from the night's show will be shared between Abigail's Footsteps who are fundraising for a bereavement suite at Medway Hospital and The Rochester Cathedral Music Endowment.



Our final fund raising concert for the year will be the annual "**Messiah and Carols for All**" on Tuesday 8th December. This will be yet another opportunity to listen to this outstanding piece of music and listen to our own **Rochester Cathedral Choir** treat us to some fun carol singing. More details about this will follow later in the year.

Wow! What a year! Please contact the Development Office for further information and ticket pricing and availability.

Hidden Treasures Fresh Expressions

Project Update 11– January 2015

Whilst the project progresses the recent archaeological discoveries have meant we have to make some significant changes to the capital works and further details are given in this report. Despite the challenges the contractors are making progress and the archaeologist is having a wonderful time. A date for archaeology open days in March will be announced soon!

Location of lift access

The discovery of a Norman structure underneath the Kent steps in late September was a hidden treasure we hadn't anticipated finding. The structure is exactly where the new internal lift (serving Quire, Nave and Crypt) was going to go.

The architect revisited the range of options considered at an earlier stage of the project and identified that the only other realistic alternative was to move the lift to the outside of the same wall (but enclosed in the new porch). It would necessitate three openings through this wall to provide access to the Crypt, Nave and Quire and a fairly deep lift shaft next to it.

The trial pits had to be done slowly and in sections because of the concerns over structural issues but were largely complete by early December at which point a panel of experts was called together at the request of the CFCE to discuss the significance of the Norman structure and to discuss the archaeological implications of losing the structure and of the possible alternatives.

This panel was in agreement that the Norman structure was nationally significant and should be retained in situ; as a consequence it would require "wholly exceptional circumstances" to give permission for its removal. The panel understood the challenges faced by the Cathedral including the financial ones. Two representatives from the CFCE were on this panel and they reported back to CFCE who met the following day. Following the meeting CFCE have informed the Cathedral that:

1. CFCE cannot give permission to destroy the newly discovered Norman masonry under the Kent steps
2. CFCE cannot give permission for a three level replacement lift outside the South wall
3. CFCE might consider giving permission for a split solution whereby access from Nave to Quire is achieved by a new stair climbing lift on the Kent steps and between Nave and Crypt with an external lift at those two levels (but not the higher level) but this will take time and need design work and further archaeological (and structural engineering) exploration to be undertaken before permission can be considered.

This was then discussed with HLF and the consensus is that the Cathedral has no choice but to remove the full lift from the current contract and to implement the fall back position of providing for disabled and mobility impaired access by a) reinstating the Kent steps and installing a new stair climbing lift on them (thus preserving the remains underneath) and b) providing access to the Crypt from the Nave level externally via the new door into the vestries from the Garth and using the simpler lift serving vestries and Crypt. This will still require the current South porch being removed and replaced with some form of aesthetic but "temporary" covered walkway along the cloister to ensure those in wheelchairs can get into the Garth from the Cathedral and appropriate signage to make it clear where the access is. This is being investigated at present.

Whilst not an ideal solution from an access point of view it does still provide those with mobility issues a way into the Crypt. It will raise some management issues for the Cathedral including how the vestries are accessed and used but minor changes to the design in that area should help mitigate this. A better access solution might be possible in the future but this would now be dealt with as a different project and further funding would have to be sought.

Whilst the main focus has been on resolving the issues surrounding the lift other building work has continued. The stripping of the library roof tiles is now complete as is the rebuild of Garth steps and the lead work to the candle makers' store. Foundations and a new stone retaining wall to west Garth path are also progressing.

With regards to our Activity plan, a major milestone has been reached with the formal launch of the Textus Roffensis online on 5th November, following its digitisation by Manchester University. This formal event was attended by over 150 people. and the document can be viewed on line at: <http://enriqueta.man.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/3t00c6>

Another key document from our library has also been digitised and can be viewed on line at <http://enriqueta.man.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/k4o00t>

We are also a step nearer to the creation of a library catalogue. Discussions with the University of Kent to create and host the new library catalogue are well advanced. The building of this relationship is important for the long term with benefits for both the Cathedral and the University and it will extend beyond the catalogue to further research into the collection.

Dr Edwina E Bell
January 2015



Other funding: Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust, Friends of Rochester Cathedral, Garfield Weston, Rochester Bridge Trust, Wolfson Foundation, Headley Trust, ChurchCare and Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Diary of Future Events

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|----------------------|--|
| Sunday 17 May | Rochester Cathedral Trust Annual Evensong 3.15pm |
| Sunday 31st May | Rochester Cathedral Memorial Concert at Penshurst Place. Ticket price includes entry to gardens, concert and interval drinks. More detail on inside pages. |
| Wednesday 3 June | Business Guild 8th Annual Dinner After dinner speaker is Lord Condon. Retired Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police to talk about "A Life of Crime" |
| Friday 19 June | James Taylor Quartet Concert in Nave with The Rochester Cathedral Choir 7.30pm |
| Wednesday 14 October | Business Guild 6th Annual Seminar 9am – 1pm at The Commissioner's House, Chatham Historic Dockyard "Degrees v Apprenticeship" |
| Friday 16 October | Land of Hope and Glory Concert in Cathedral 7.30pm |
| Tuesday 8 December | Messiah & Carols for All concert in Cathedral at 7.30pm |

For further information on any of these events, please contact Lynne Bax on 01634 810074 or email development@rochestercathedral.org



Christmas Cake Raffle

Many thanks again to Helen Bannister for her fabulous Christmas cake. The raffle raised another £151.00 for the Cathedral Development. Thank you to all who bought a ticket. The winner, Sue Malthouse in the Estates Office was delighted with her prize which was decorated like a Christmas dinner table – brilliant!

Income Summary for 2014

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| Dedicated Music | £ 108,984.04 |
| Dedicated Education | £ 61.00 |
| Dedicated small Projects | £ 20,370.00 |
| Undedicated | £ 39,185.72 |

Total Income £168,600.76

The Rochester Cathedral Trust's books were audited on 16th February 2015 by haymacintyre



EMAIL REQUEST

To those of you that are online Would you like us to email your copy of Beacon to you in future? Besides being greener, there is a cost saving too! Please email to: development@rochestercathedral.org and you will be added to the distribution list.

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